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&  
OTHER  
PROLUSIONS  
IN VERSE

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I M P E R I A  
AND OTHER PROLUSIONS IN VERSE



# IMPERIA

AND OTHER PROLUSIONS  
IN VERSE

BY

HUGH FARRIE  
AUTHOR OF "ACTE," ETC.



LIVERPOOL  
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TO

JOHN SEPHTON

MASTER AND FRIEND

Οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδὲν κρεῖσσον, η̄ φίλος σαφῆς,  
Οὐ πλόντος, οὐ τυραννίς· ἀλόγιστον δέ τι  
Τὸ πλῆθος ἀντάλλαγμα γενναῖον φίλου.

EURIPIDES, *Orestes*.

1761488



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## IMPERIA

[In "God's Revenge against Murder" it is related how Imperia, for the love she bears to Angelo, causes him to stifle her old husband Palmerius in bed. They are tried and sentenced to death. The family of Imperia are powerful, and obtain for her a pardon from the Pope; but, because it does not include Angelo, she refuses to accept it, and is hanged with him.]

YES, I may live ; here lying at my feet  
The pardon wrung from Rome ; my husband's death  
Made harmless sacrifice to fervent love  
By a few scratches of the Father's pen !

A year ago, no longer than a year !  
The spirit of eager life, that comes and goes,  
Thrilled through the pulses of the waking world ;  
The brooks were flushed with rain upon the hills,

The seeds were swelling in the humid earth,  
And I was kneeling at Loretto's shrine.  
Fools, to believe that Spring, which stirs the sap  
Within the sluggish veins of hollow trees,  
Which fills with living warmth the lifeless fields,  
Can find no entrance to a maiden's heart.  
Ah ! ever as I raised my eyes in prayer,  
Though lightnings from a hundred jewels flashed  
And sheen of satin caught the mellow glow  
Of stately tapers on the silver wall,  
I only saw our Lady's calm sweet face  
Bent with a yearning glance upon her Child,  
And breathing out the joy of motherhood.  
What wonder if I prayed within my soul,  
That I might draw a lover's lips to mine,  
That I might nestle in a husband's arms,  
That I might hold an infant to my breast ?  
Until one morning the low-circling sun  
Fell from the southern windows to my face,  
And through closed lids a crimson glory stole.

I, with averted head, opened my eyes  
And saw him kneeling scarce a yard away,  
And knew my love had come.

What would you more ?

The dryest churl that hobbles to the grave  
On shrivelled limbs and cackles, as he goes,  
About the wickedness of being young ;  
The sourest frump, with down-drawn lip, who  
prates  
Of modesty and evil ways of men,  
Yet has the itch to sin without the power,  
Have both been young themselves. No need  
to tell  
How all my heart went out to Angelo.

And yet I was not blind. They say that love  
Lacks eyes to see ; it may be so with men ;  
A woman's love is clearer in its glance  
Than gaze of eagle through the unclouded blue.

I knew his face was fairer than his soul,  
I knew his arms were stronger than his faith,  
But still I loved him, as I love him now.

Then days of joy, when first my maiden soul  
Swam in his eyes and lived upon his lips,  
Drank in his vows, sweet, though I knew them  
    frail,  
Frail as the finest, fluttering, little thread  
Spun by the silkworm round its golden ball.  
Little I thought of woe, and harm, and sin,  
As at my side, each morn, he knelt and prayed,  
Each evening sought me in my father's house,  
Loving and loved. Wind-bound his vessels lay  
Moored safely to Ancona's mighty mole,  
And every daybreak, when the shadows fell,  
Grey, from the lattice casement on my bed,  
I flung the window wide with eager hope ;  
And always blustering breezes from the East  
Deepened the dusky colour in my cheek.

Then on my knees I thanked the kindly gale  
That bound his freighted vessels to the wharf,  
But blew him back to me.

At length one night

A sombre cloud crept slowly from the West—  
Like to a band across the eyes of heaven,  
And from the eaves there dripped a gentle rain.  
When I awoke I knew my love had gone.  
I wanted not the wealth of which he dreamed,  
Though I was poor in everything but love ;  
Enough for me to know that ours would be  
Jewels of kisses, gold of tender faith,  
Fair dwellings and broad lands where'er our eyes  
Looked out together on a sunlit world.

Who calls me fickle, shallow-hearted, weak ?  
'Tis true I married old Palmerius,  
And for that crime to-day I yield my life ;  
But yet remember, you that hear my name

With scorn and loathing through the distant  
years,

When this poor face has mouldered into dust,

When this poor heart is still for ever more,

Great was my trial, if my sin was great.

The crippled, palsied, parchment-skinned old wretch,

Little more human than his money-bags,

Had greed of me ; for in his rheumy age,

A leering, powerless lust usurped the place

Of strong young love. My father, nothing loth

To sell to shameful shambles his ewe lamb,

With prayers and threats pursued me night and  
day.

“ Palmerius was an honoured citizen,

Palmerius had lands and ships and slaves,

Palmerius would deck my hair with gems,

Until it glittered like a midnight sky.”

Or else “ I was a silly stubborn child,

Who sharply must be taught the reverence due

To parents’ wishes.”

In my hour of need

I sent a messenger to Angelo,  
And pleaded with him, if his vows were sooth,  
If my poor beauty and my wealth of love  
Still stirred a tender memory in his soul,  
That he should come to me. With burning words  
And sweetest pledges hundred times renewed,  
He answered back and begged me to be brave,  
For he was winning wealth beyond desire,  
And honour, in the service of the Turk ;  
Let me be faithful for a little while,  
And he would come. Again the daily round  
Of threats and promises, of frowns and smiles ;  
Again, again I wrote to Angelo ;  
And still he always answered he would come,  
And came not.

Sometimes I have seen a brook  
Babbling through moss-grown channel in the rock  
Cut by the ceaseless flow of centuries.

And, like a stream, my father's wearing words  
Fretted my will away. Wearied to death,  
Hating myself, angry with Angelo,  
I sold my body to Palmerius  
For all the miser's lands and ships and slaves.  
Call it not marriage, for a woman wed  
Gives soul as well as body to her spouse ;  
I had no soul to give Palmerius,  
For mine was prisoned in my lover's heart.

And then too late he came. Ah, sisters, you,  
Who, knowing no temptation, never sin,  
You, who would gather up your stainless skirts  
If but my shadow fell across your path,  
You, who will smirch my fame with bitter sneers,  
You, who will heap upon my grave your scorn,  
You, who will many moral lessons draw,  
For your young daughters, from my evil tale,  
If so indeed you sully their white souls  
By mention of my name, I pray that you

May never feel the load I had to bear.  
Each day was weariness and vain regret,  
Each night was shame to all my womanhood ;  
Until another springtide waked the earth  
And bursting blossoms whitened all the world.  
One evening, in my garden as I walked,  
Chilled by the boisterous breezes from the East,  
Which played upon my cheeks and dried my tears,  
I felt his arms in frenzy round me cast,  
I felt his kisses rained upon my mouth,  
My love, my love had come.

## It was a sin

When, kiss for kiss, I paid his kisses back,  
Jealous to leave me not the tiniest debt ;  
It was a sin when we, with stealthy hands,  
Smothered the doddering dotard in his bed.  
Yet I have no regret. Here, in my cell,  
Death's finger, for the pointer of my clock,  
Quick creeping upward to the striking hour,

I tell you there is nothing I repent,  
My page is finished, I have lived and loved.  
Let no one doubt it ; lying at my feet  
The pardon yielded to my brother's suit,  
Pardon for me, but not for Angelo :  
A word, ay but the nodding of my head,  
And I may live to cold and formal age,  
Mumbling my prayers, until the last wild weed,  
'Neath winter cloud and summer's burning blue,  
Lies sear upon his grave. I make my choice,  
I choose to die, for death with love is life,  
And life unloving is a daily death.

And now farewell ; I do not think that God,  
Who fills with these fierce passions human hearts,  
Will judge a woman's weakness by His strength.  
No foot hath pressed the road that I must walk,  
No eye hath seen the goal to which I move.  
It may be I must pass through purging flames,  
And cleanse in torment every stain of earth ;

I have no fear ; though elemental fire,  
Of fervent heat to fuse the living rock,  
Fill all the expanse of nature with its glow ;  
Though storms of molten metal sweep through space,  
And ceaseless lightnings rend the wrack of worlds,  
Yet will I keep, eternally unscathed,  
The love within my soul.

They summon me,

The bridal is prepared, the bridegroom waits.  
I come, I come, the bride is ready too.

## THE HAPPIEST LOVER

"A TILT, my champions," laughed the Lady Maud,  
While over her the great chrysanthemums,  
Like roguish wild-haired girls, nodded their heads,  
And faintly through the quivering leafage stole  
The music and the murmur of the dance.

Vivian the painter, sitting opposite,  
With bold and steady looks, encompassed her ;  
Ralph the musician, standing at her side,  
Turned upward his entranced and rapturous  
gaze,

As if a chorus of the blest he heard ;

Oscar the poet, humbly at her feet,  
Sat, and bent downward his averted face,  
Like one that fears the glory of the sun.

"A tilt," laughed Lady Maud, "and these the terms:  
Let each knight tell a story of his love;  
For, being artists, you of course have loved.  
Else how could you, my Vivian, you, my Ralph,  
On canvas and on string grow eloquent;  
And you, my poet Oscar, how could you  
Pour living passion into lifeless words,  
Had you not loved a dozen times at least.  
And, since to him that hath is always given,  
To him that claims the dearest joy of love,  
To him whose mistress has been most and best,  
To him, my champions, I will give the prize."

"The prize!" said Vivian, all his face aglow,  
And all his ardour gleaming in his glance.

"The prize," she answered, taking off her glove,  
And smiling wickedly, "the prize is this,  
That, on my rosy little finger-nail,  
In presence of his rivals overcome,  
A kiss the happy conqueror shall breathe."

Ralph the musician entered first the lists ;  
He was the oldest champion of the three,  
A man whose life was one long dream of heaven,  
Yet oddly, all his saints and seraphs showed  
Something of flesh beneath their shining wings.  
He said, "I pity him who ne'er has felt  
The springtide fragrance of an untaught kiss.  
I recollect that, many years ago,  
I strolled with Lucy round the garden walk ;  
She pulled a rose-leaf red, and smiled and blushed,  
And blushed again, and bade me close my eyes,  
And when I opened them the leaf was gone.  
'Find it,' said Lucy, 'and the kiss you beg  
Is yours.' I, trembling, hastened to pursue  
This rose-leaf, nestling somewhere in a rose :  
In folds of gown, in pocket and in sleeve,  
In coils of shining hair, and then at last,  
With eager and yet hesitating hand,  
Beneath the posy perched upon her breast,  
I sought and vainly sought. O'ercome with grief,

I turned away ; then little Lucy smiled,  
And lo ! 'twixt scarlet lips and pearly teeth,  
The hidden treasure shone. I, unrepulsed,  
Ravished the rose-leaf in a tender kiss."

"An idyll," cried the laughing Lady Maud,  
"And yet, unchallenged, you shall not succeed."

Vivian responded with a burning glance,  
Directed at her heart, which tore through silk  
And lace upon her bosom, but was turned  
By the fair skin beneath. Had Vivian been  
Arbiter on Mount Ida's verdant slope,  
Broad-breasted Juno would have won the day.  
"Once, Lady Maud"—his tones were strong and  
deep—

"I dreamed of some great picture, that must make  
My name familiar in the mouths of men.  
And in my dreams, ever I faintly saw  
A fair imperial form, a noble brow,

Two great black eyes, unfathomably deep,  
And hard to construe as the ways of God.  
Before me, always outstretched, in a pose  
Of maddening invitation, two white arms,  
And lips whose scorn was sweeter than the smiles  
Of any other woman. Then I knew  
That she was come for whom I long had searched  
Amid the loveliness of all the past  
And all the present, she, the one supreme,  
The only woman that should fill my life  
With love and with renown. Her face I swore  
Should gleam in deathless colours from the walls  
Of the world's palaces, queen among queens,  
Madonna of Madonnas, first and best,  
Of subtler beauty and of stranger charm  
Than ever Grecian hand and Grecian mind  
Portrayed in marble or in breathing brass.  
But always, when with eager brush I sought  
To limn her face, the mocking vision fled.  
Until one evening, sitting at a play,

The boisterous welcome that the people gave  
A new stage heroine, disturbed my dreams ;  
I raised my eyes, O God ! there, there,  
My vision stood before me. Then at last  
The work was done, and it was noised abroad  
That truly here was something which should live,  
That I had found my genius in Faustine,  
Faustine her immortality in me.  
And still each night I worshipped her afar,  
And sometimes, when her passionate kisses poured  
On her stage lover, her black eyes would seem  
To flash on me their mockery, and I fled,  
And walked the streets until the weary pain  
Was deadened just a little at my heart.  
Oh ! it was more than I could bear to see  
The player-fellow kiss her ; and one night,  
A cry sprang from my soul and darkness fell  
Upon me ; and when life at length returned,  
I wandered wildly until early dawn.  
Footsore and sick at heart, I sought my room

Where the grey twilight stole across the blinds :  
A sigh, a sob fell on my startled ear,  
Then, two soft arms were twined around my  
neck,  
And two fierce lips drew forth my very soul."

He ceased : and on the face of Lady Maud  
The colour flickered. " Happy is he," she said,  
" Who in a living woman's arms has found  
His true ideal. You, my Oscar, speak  
And tell us, if you can, why I should not  
Award the boon to Vivian."

Oscar said,  
" My plea is short, and whether it suffice,  
You are the judge. I sat one summer eve  
In a cathedral aisle, and all around  
The prayers of men rose through the echoing  
roof,  
On wings of music, to the throne of God.

A sweet voice drew my gaze ; and lo ! I saw  
What all the heroines of romance might be,  
And all the themes of most melodious song ;  
One I had never seen, but having seen,  
I loved, and love, and evermore shall love.  
Our eyes encountered, and for one sweet hour  
Our souls communed, and when at last she rose,  
The word ‘ To-morrow ’ trembled on my lips,  
And hers responded with a timid ‘ Yes.’  
Again I sat in the cathedral aisle,  
Watching and waiting ; but from that blest  
hour  
My darling’s face these eyes have never seen.”

“ Ho ho ! ” laughed Vivian, and “ Ha ha ! ”  
laughed Ralph,  
“ A *bonne fortune* indeed ; ” but Lady Maud  
Silenced them, saying, “ Am I not the judge ?  
Listen, my champions, this is my award :  
Happy is he, no doubt, who finds his joy

In pretty pleasures of an innocent love ;  
Happier the man who in his arms has held  
The incarnation of his dear desire ;  
Happiest, by far, the soul that ne'er has felt  
The disappointment of a dream fulfilled."

Smiling, the Lady Maud stretched forth her hand,  
And, on her rosy little finger-nail,  
In presence of his rivals overcome,  
Oscar the poet breathed a gentle kiss.

## LOVE

SOPHOCLES : ANTIGONE, 781-805

Ah Love ! sure conqueror in every fight,  
Love that canst triumph, even over gold,  
Now sleeping on a maid's soft cheek, now  
bold !  
Flitting o'er seas and fields in wayward flight,  
  
The gods themselves may not resist thy  
might,  
Nor man, a child to-day, to-morrow old,  
Whose years pass swiftly as a tale is  
told,  
All yield, and all thou dost with madness  
smite.

Thou turnest to injustice virtuous hearts ;  
Brothers to mortal hatred thou hast driven ;  
The love-light, low and languishing, that darts  
Under a girl-bride's lashes, thou hast striven  
To make prevail over the laws and arts  
That guide the eternal course of earth and  
heaven.

**MAN'S LAST FRIEND**

SOPHOCLES : *OEDIPUS COLONEUS*, 1211-1224

Whoso desires to live  
Beyond the common span,  
Him may the gods forgive,  
That very foolish man.

For life on earth fulfils  
The purpose of a store,  
And hence our sum of ills  
Grows daily more and more.

And he, whose hopes depend  
On fame, or love, or pelf,  
Will find that, in the end,  
Desire defeats itself.

Yet fate will, one day, send  
A helper firm and fast ;  
Sad, solitary friend,  
Death comes to all at last.

**NOT TO BE BORN WERE BEST**

SOPHOCLES : *OEDIPUS COLONEUS*, 1225-38

Not to be born were best,  
But, being born, each man  
Should hasten to the rest  
From which his life began.

For youth is light and vain,  
And to the strong a snare.  
Who may avoid its pain,  
Who finds no sorrow there ?

Cruelty, faction, strife,  
Envy, ambition, rage,  
Are ever, in this life,  
The prelude of old age.

Age, impotent, accursed,  
That friendless, lonely blight,  
Last of man's woes and worst,  
Where all the rest unite !

## WOMAN

(*From the Greek of Anacreon*)

DAME Nature gives to cattle  
Their horns, and hoofs to horses,  
To timid hares their fleetness,  
And bristling jaws to lions,  
To fish their power of swimming,  
To soaring birds their pinions,  
To men their craft and courage,  
Refusing all to woman.

What then to her is given ?  
Instead of rounded buckler,  
Instead of spear, her beauty.  
And she, who has this armour,  
O'er fire and sword will triumph.

## HELIODORE

(*From the Greek of Meleager*)

TEARS for thee, tears of heart-break, Heliodore,  
Down through the underworld to greet thy  
shade,  
Tears, from the hallowed spot where thou art  
laid,  
In proof of love and grief, behold me pour.

Couldst thou but see this pledge of anguish  
sore,  
By Meleager to his lost one paid !  
But vain the gifts that to the dead are made ;  
Flower of my love where art thou, on what  
shore ?

The hand of death hath plucked thee; thou wast fair,  
In pride of Spring; now dust-defiled thou art,  
Earth, all sustaining, listen to my prayer,  
This comfort, Mother, to thy child impart  
My faded blossom in thy bosom wear,  
And bid it bloom again upon thy heart.

## A MODERN GREEK SONG

(*From the modern Greek of Geo. Drosine*)

Blow, cooling breeze, to-day,  
And with my tresses play,  
'Tis harvest week.

Linger, good sun, in bed,  
Your ardent gaze, I dread,  
Will burn my cheek.

The stalks bend 'neath the ears,  
A reaper band appears,  
This early morn.

The hamlets stir from sleep,  
The threshing-floors they sweep,  
To wait the corn.

And I, industrious girl,  
Must leave my loom's swift whirl,  
To wend afield.  
My father goes before,  
To gather in the store  
His furrows yield.

Each day with sickle keen,  
From early dawn till e'en,  
I'll reap the grain ;  
Each evening at the dance,  
With every melting glance,  
I'll reap a swain.

## A MODERN GREEK SONG

Ah, by what a luckless lot,  
Love, did we meet ?  
Since thou for me wast not,  
Wherfore, my sweet,

Saw I thy face ? Forlorn  
Tears must I shed,  
Laugh thou the while I mourn  
As for the dead.

Bid me my life to live,  
Else must I die.  
Wilt thou thyself forgive,  
Dear, by-and-by ?

Not that our hearts, I pray,  
Love may unite,  
But, when my life's sad day  
Darkens to night,

Thou, for my love, wilt save  
One sad adieu,  
And, with a tear, my grave  
Gently bedew.

## THE ISLANDS OF THE BLEST

HOR., EP. XVI. 41-66.

BEYOND the seas that wander round the earth  
Are bounteous fields, secure from want and  
fear,  
Where vines, unpruned, to purple grapes give  
birth,  
Where earth, unploughed, supplies her fruit each  
year ;  
Unfailingly the olive shoots appear,  
The fig-tree ever dons its dusky crest ;  
With tinkling foot, bounds down the brooklet  
clear,—  
Come, let us seek the Islands of the Blest.

The udders of the kine are great in girth,  
The goats unbidden to the pail career ;  
No roaring bears distract the evening's mirth,  
Up through the soil no deadly vipers peer ;  
No scorching summer droughts, no frosts severe,  
No drenching rainstorms have the fields oppressed :  
To Heaven's King the happy land is dear,—  
Come, let us seek the Islands of the Blest.

The bearers of the Fleece of magic worth,  
To these fair Isles could not their vessel  
steer ;  
Ulysses' toilsome sailors, in their dearth,  
And Sidon's wanderers, found no refuge here ;  
No ill-contagion lurks o'er mead or mere,  
No baleful planet, fraught with woe and pest,  
Flames on the flock from out the burning  
sphere,—  
Come, let us seek the Islands of the Blest.

Oh, pious race, stout-hearted and austere !  
In times depraved, to you belongs this rest ;  
Now, in auspicious flight, with me your seer,  
Come, let us seek the Islands of the Blest.

TO PYRRHA

HOR., CAR. I. 5

Oh, faithless girl, amid a world of flowers,  
What dainty youth employs your idle hours ?  
Who clasps you, Pyrrha, neat and debonair,  
For whom do you bind up your yellow  
hair,  
Steeped in the perfumes of your pleasant  
bowers ?

Yet undeceived, with love your days he dowers ;

Ah, hapless they whose heart your folly sours !

I, shipwrecked also, to the shrine repair,

And, for the life your pity would not spare,

My thanks I offer to the heavenly powers,

Oh, faithless girl.

D O N E C G R A T U S

HOR., CAR. III. 9

HOR. When our love was in its Spring,  
And your bosom was my throne,  
I was happy as a king.

LYD. Fame might crowns to Ilia fling,  
Dearer joys to me were shown  
When our love was in its Spring.

HOR. Chloe's praises now I sing ;  
Dying for her, I would moan  
I was happy as a king.

LYD. Calaïs 'tis to whom I cling :  
His the raptures you have known  
When our love was in its Spring.

HOR. Lydia, what if time should bring  
Back the moments, when alone,  
I was happy as a king ?

LYD. From me, like a worthless thing,  
I would cast him, for I own,  
When our love was in its Spring,  
I was happy as a king.

PARCUS DEORUM CULTOR ET  
INFREQUENS

HOR., CAR. I. 34

(*An experiment in rhymed accentual Alcaics*)

A FAITHLESS servant, niggard, mechanical,

Puffed up with empty lore, charlatanical,

I wandered far, I now awaken,

Warned to return to a path forsaken.

I oft have seen, with indolent wondering,

Jove cleave the heavy clouds with his thundering.

Now, through serene skies, strangely riven,

Swift he his thundering steeds hath driven.

Whereby earth's coasts and rivers barbarian,

Whereby the glowing confines Tartarean,

And all the world's far distant spaces,

Trembled. The proud from their lofty places

The Lord can cast : he foils the vainglorious,  
He helps the meek : Fate, ever victorious,  
    The palm, which she from one may capture,  
Gives to another with bitter rapture.

T O C H L O E

HOR., CAR. I. 23

SILLY Chlo, you run away  
Like a foolish little doe  
Frightened by the breezes' play,  
Silly Chlo.

In the leafy brake below,  
When the harmless lizards stray  
Pit-a-pat its heart will go.

I'm no tiger after prey,  
And you're old enough to know  
What a lover sighs to say,  
Silly Chlo.

## TO MELPOMENE

HOR., CAR. III. 30

I HAVE built up a monument sublime,  
Higher than pyramids o'er royal dead,  
Which, firm 'mid winter storms, shall rear its  
head  
While seasons move through countless flights of  
time.

I shall not wholly die ; my glory's prime  
Shall be renewed in praise ; my fame shall  
spread  
Long as the silent maid, by pontiff led,  
Month after month, the Sacred Steep shall  
climb.

Where Aufid's rushing waters roar and moan

Where Daunus ruled a country parched and bare,

It shall be told that I, and I alone,

To strike the Æolian lyre was found to dare;—

I, proudly humble. Mount, my Muse, thy throne,

And with the Delphic laurel, bind my hair.

## TO LESBIA

CATUL. 5

LET us live to love, my sweet,  
Trust and love are one I weet,  
And the busy, envious hum  
Of the scandal-mongering scum,  
As a trifle let us treat.

Suns their circles will complete,  
Soon the day's brief light will fleet,  
Endless night for us must come :  
Let us live to love.

When our lips with loving heat,  
In ten thousand kisses meet,  
If we cease to count the sum,  
We shall make the tattlers dumb,  
And their jealousy defeat :  
Let us live to love.

**AD FRATREM MEUM***In Memoriam A. R. B., ob. 8 Nov. 1893*

CATUL. 101

I COME, O brother ! from a distant land,  
Borne on the waves of many a far-off sea,  
To give a last sad proof of constancy,  
To call on thy mute dust with vain demand.

Ah luckless brother ! thou couldst not withstand  
The doom of Fate, that rest thy life from  
thee,  
All undeserving of her cruelty,  
That tore thee from me with unsparing hand.

Accept these mournful tributes, that are made  
As our forefathers, in the bygone years,  
Made offerings to those whom death befell.  
May these, my gifts, be grateful to thy shade,  
Lo ! they are wet with many loving tears ;  
And now, my brother, evermore farewell.

## SPRING

VERG., GEORG. II, 323-342

SPRING clothes the sombre woods with leaves,  
In Spring earth's swelling bosom heaves  
    And burns with amorous flame ;  
The Father of celestial powers,  
Upon his bride descends in showers,  
    And stirs her mighty frame.  
The copses ring with tuneful birds,  
And eager passions sway the herds,  
    With panting love's delight ;  
New life, the bounteous meadow yields,  
The western wind unbinds the fields  
    From frozen winter's blight.

With genial juices earth o'erflows,  
Beneath the sun the herbage glows,  
And trusts the lengthening days ;  
Nor fears the vine the southern gale,  
The north wind's might, and driven hail,  
But tender buds displays.  
Such mornings broke upon the earth,  
When first awakened into birth  
By Heaven's Almighty King ;  
No chilling blast with baleful powers  
Was sent to blight its infant hours,  
The world was born in Spring.

*TO A LEARNED MAID**PROPERTIUS, II. 11*

THOUGH others write about thee,  
Thou still shalt be unknown,  
And fickle fame shall flout thee,  
Though others write about thee.  
Their seed who praising spout thee,  
In barren soil is sown.  
  
Though others write about thee,  
Thou still shalt be unknown.

When Death's dark day shall find thee,  
And funeral rites are paid,  
Nought shall remain behind thee  
When death's dark day shall find thee,

No passer-by shall mind thee,  
Who wast a learned maid,  
When Death's dark day shall find thee,  
And funeral rites are paid.

## TO MY BOOK

(*After Martial, X. 104*)

OFF with you my little book !  
See ! I take my farewell look ;  
In a pot of beer I toast you,  
Tie you up, address you, post you.

("Parcel-post !" I don't find that in  
Martial's naughty, charming Latin ;  
Wanting means which now don't lack us,  
Martial sent his book by Flaccus.)

Keeping time with due precision,  
May the train have no collision ;  
Fates forbid you should be lost or  
Miss the Row of Paternoster.

What is it for which I need you ?  
Tell my friends I hope they'll read you,  
Friends for whom I filled your pages,  
Friends I haven't seen for ages.

Tell the publisher to spout you,  
Advertise you, fib about you,  
And, by grace of Heaven or Tophet,  
Make for me a handsome profit.

Bid him look about until he  
Finds me rooms in Piccadilly,  
Or a little further North, or  
Anywhere to suit an author.

Good-bye, book ! by Jove it's post-time—  
Of your luck you'll make the most, I'm  
Certain. Off you go, for—blow it !  
Posts won't wait for book or poet.

## TO ONE DEAD

*(From the French of A. de Musset)*

LOVELY she was ; if silent night,  
That broods within the sombre cell  
Where Michael Angelo sleeps well,  
Is beautiful, is gay, is bright.

And she was good ; if it be good  
To open listless hands, and be  
A giver of the poor man's food,  
With cold, unpitying charity.

She thought ; if words that idly stray  
In dulcet tones and rise and sink,  
Like brooklets murmuring on their way—  
If these can make believe to think.

She prayed ; if two all-perfect eyes,  
Now earthward bent with modest air,  
Now turned in rapture to the skies,  
Can make in Heaven's ear a prayer.

She might have smiled ; if it could please  
The petals of a flower unblown,  
To open to the passing breeze,  
That whispers o'er them, and is gone.

She might have wept ; if e'er one day,  
With hand on bosom coldly pressed,  
She felt, within the human clay,  
The gentle dew of heavenly rest.

She might have loved ; if pride inbred,  
Like low lights, burning wide apart,  
Beside a coffin of the dead,  
Had not stood guardian o'er her heart.

She never lived and she is dead ;  
She only seemed to live ; Fate shook  
Down from her hands the uncut book  
In which no page she ever read.

## AH REMEMBER!

(*From the French of A. de Musset*)

AH remember ! when morn's rosy fingers  
Open to the sun her magic hall ;  
Ah remember ! when the evening lingers  
Passing dreamlike 'neath her silvern pall.  
'Mid the whirl of wildest passion, when thy bosom  
sinks and swells,  
When the wizards of the midnight weave round  
thee their sweetest spells,  
Then hear the voice which wakes  
Down in the dusky brakes :  
    “ Ah remember ! ”

Ah remember ! when the sisters fearful  
Shall for aye have parted thee and me,  
And when time and grief and exile tearful  
Shall have scarred my soul with misery.

Think of all my heart's devotion, think upon  
our last adieu,

For the shocks of time and absence are as  
nothing to the true ;

And while my heart shall beat,

It still shall bid thee, sweet,

“Ah remember !”

Ah remember ! when my fond heart  
broken

Shall for ever rest within the tomb ;

Ah remember ! when in loving token

One poor flower upon my grave shall  
bloom.

Thou shalt nevermore behold me, yet my soul thy  
life shall share,  
And shall hover round about thee with a sister's  
loving care.

And when the night shall fall  
My voice shall softly call,  
“Ah remember !”

## TO PEPA

(*From the French of A. de Musset*)

PEPA, in your chamber airy,  
When your mother's gone away,  
When, a white-clad little fairy,  
By your couch, you kneel and pray,

In that hour when all things human  
Shudder with a midnight dread ;  
When, like every timid woman,  
Scared, you peep beneath your bed.

When your people round about you,  
Into silent slumbers sink,  
When a shiver runs throughout you,  
Tell me, dear, of what you think.

Who can guess, my little maiden ?  
Is your tender bosom thrilled  
By some hope, with rapture laden,  
Destined ne'er to be fulfilled ?

Do you think of mountains hoary  
Brought to bed of little mice,  
Of the hero in some story,  
Or of slippers and of rice ?

Do you think of shy advances,  
That you blushingly recall,  
Or of dresses and of dances,  
Or of me—or nought at all.

**LILLA**

*(From the French of A. de Musset)*

LILLA, if you had the least  
Pity for me, sure to-night  
I would wed you without priest,  
And when morning tinged the East,  
Through your window I'd take flight.

Why be like some ancient frump  
Steeped in piety and gin,  
Waiting for the final trump  
Till her spirit, in the hump,  
Sneaks disgusted from her skin ?

In my coffin, quite at ease,  
I would hug my dainty lass.  
By Saint Peter's bunch of keys !  
Mayn't a fellow, if he please,  
After drinking, break his glass ?

## IN TEN LONG YEARS

(*From the French of A. de Musset*)

IN ten long years you will have grown  
A little kinder ; to be plain,  
The lapse is long, yet you must own  
That saucy Love is ever known  
Old creeping Time to speed amain.

Of all your beauty now you're vain ;  
Yet have a care, my little one,  
For much experience you may gain  
In ten long years.

And when these seasons swift have flown,  
    You'll find in me a model swain,  
Too old to be to folly prone,  
    Too ugly, fickleness to feign !  
But beautiful, you still will reign  
    In ten long years.

## W A S   T H E R E   E V E R ?

(*From the French of A. de Musset*)

WAS there ever a bliss so complete  
As to see little Manon's head pressing  
Her pillow, while I am caressing  
Her heart, whose tumultuous beat  
A dream of delight is expressing ?

She sleeps like the eglantine neat  
A bee in its chalice compressing ;  
I nurse her ; a duty more sweet  
Was there ever ?

But the wings of the morning are fleet,  
Runs Manon with promptness distressing  
Herself in her mirror to greet,  
And forgets me before she's done dressing :  
A love that no dawn can defeat,  
Was there ever ?

## COURTSHIP

(*From the French of Fontenelle*)

ONCE on a time, the Sun God, desperate hit,  
Panted and puffed behind a fleeing flirt.  
“Hi! Stop!” he shouted, putting on a spurt,  
“You don’t know what a swell you’ve caught, you chit!  
I’m Lord of Song and I’ve a pretty wit,”  
(Stupid! what girl by song was ever hurt?)  
“My dear, upon the lyre I’m most expert”  
(As if a lyre could make a girl submit).  
  
“I know the properties of every root,  
Galen compared with me is quite an ass;”  
Daphne fled quicker hearing what he said;  
Had he but cried, “Sweet, listen to my suit,  
I’m young and handsome and I’ve lots of brass,”  
I bet a dollar she’d have turned her head.

## W O M E N A N D W I N E

*(After the French of Villon)*

WHETHER you swindle the public with prayers,  
Taking collections at every turn,  
Whether you practise the bookmaker's snares,  
Or as a "smasher" your living you earn,  
Some day your fingers you'll certainly burn,  
Burglar with pistol and smooth libertine,  
Where does the plunder go ? Listen and learn,  
All of it wanders to women and wine.

Rascals and rhymers with musical airs,  
Dudes and deceivers who modesty spurn,  
Donkeys who dip in dramatic affairs,  
Running some costly theatic concern ;

Fakers of "futures" and fellows who yearn  
After a "safety" of ninety to nine,  
Where does the money go, can you discern ?  
All of it wanders to women and wine.

Give over dealing in dubious wares,  
Work in the meadow and toil at the churn,  
Carefully curry your horses and mares,  
Glean in the harvest-field, grind at the kern;  
While in the country you sweetly sojourn,  
Whether your fortunes advance or decline,  
What will become of your labour's return ?  
All of it wanders to women and wine.

Jugginses, jokers, and generals stern,  
Swagger and strut in your frippery fine ;  
Long ere your ashes are popped in the urn,  
All of it wanders to women and wine.

NE QUE MONNOYE QU'ON DESCRIE

(*After the French of Villon*)

DAINTY damsel behind a bar,

You, who are wont my requests to obey ;

You Blanche, who proffer the cheap cigar,

Now is the time to make your hay.

Look to the right and the left for your prey,

Stick to your men till you leave them wrecks,

For elderly women can only play

With doubtful notes and dishonoured cheques.

Sally, bedizened with spangle and star,

Whose nimble feet through the ballet stray,

You Polly, who sing to the gay guitar,

Give attention to what I say ;

Every woman, grown old and grey,  
Suffers the scorn of gulls and gecks,  
Only the parsons her griefs allay  
With doubtful notes and dishonoured cheques.

Jenny, the belle of the bright bazaar,  
Never let boredom your spirits dismay ;  
Kitty, the dairy-maid, why do you mar  
Your prospects by sending your lovers away ?  
She who is pretty can easily sway,  
But an ancient spinster is certain to vex,  
And saucy Love will her efforts repay  
With doubtful notes and dishonoured cheques.

Lassies, like dogs, you have your day ;  
Why should you weep? 'tis the doom of your sex,  
For time can never be tempted to stay  
With doubtful notes and dishonoured cheques.

## BALLAD

(From the German of Freiligrath)

O LADY ! love while yet you can,  
O lady ! love while yet you may ;  
The hour is near, the hour is near  
When death will call your love away.

See to it that your bosom glows  
With all the warmth true love secures,  
While yet another faithful heart  
Can beat in sympathy with yours.

And him who bares his soul to you,  
Oh ! strive to love with all your might ;  
Make not his fleeting moments sad,  
But fill each moment with delight.

And set a guard upon your tongue,—  
How soon a cruel word is said !  
And though you never meant to wound,  
It clouds his life with grief and dread.

O lady ! love while yet you can,  
O lady ! love while yet you may ;  
The hour is near, the hour is near  
When death will call your love away.

Then kneeling down beside his grave  
You'll hide your weeping eyes—Alas !  
They'll never see his face again—  
Beneath the dewy churchyard grass.

And then you'll cry, “ Oh ! look on me  
While on thy grave my tears I pour,  
Forgive the wrong I did to thee :  
O God ! forgiveness I implore.”

He comes not, sees not, cannot hear,  
The lips, whose kisses well you know  
Will never murmur in your ear,  
“Sweet, I forgave thee long ago.”

Yet long ago he did forgive,  
While scalding tears of sorrow fell,  
For you and for your cruel word ;  
With him for ever all is well.

O lady ! love while yet you can,  
O lady ! love while yet you may ;  
The hour is near, the hour is near  
When death will call your love away.

## E Y E S

(*From the German of Bodenstedt*)

A BLUE eye

Is a true eye ;

A brown eye swims

With roguish whims ;

If grey the eye

It then is sly ;

But the meaning of a black eye's blaze

Is hard to read as Heaven's ways.

## A WREATH

(*From the German of Bodenstedt*)

A WREATH I well know how to wind,  
    Of blooms I plucked in gardens glad ;  
I know the right word how to find  
    Whether my song be gay or sad.

While heart and head retain their powers  
    I know wherein I merit praise ;  
Spirits of fairy world and flowers  
    Are humble listeners to my lays.

But in the rapture of a kiss,  
    In flashing Fortune's wondrous chances,  
In glances of a perfect bliss,  
    And in the perfect bliss of glances,

My sweetest songs the want reveal  
Of tones that ripple from the birds,  
For there are beauties men may feel  
But cannot fit them into words.

Who is it that can paint the skies  
Fierce with the sun in midday place ?  
He only that can lift his eyes  
And gaze upon him face to face.

## FOOLS

(*From the German of Bodenstedt*)

SHALL I laugh, or shall I cry,  
That fools have filled each generation,  
Prattling to all passers-by,  
And dumb in self-examination ?

No ! for the folly of mankind  
My Maker I will praise aloud,  
As, otherwise the cultured mind,  
Would pass unnoticed in the crowd.

## SONGS

*(From the German of Heine)*

## I

I DREAMED that I saw a royal maid,  
Cold were her pale pure charms ;  
We sat beneath the greenwood shade  
Twined in each other's arms.

"I do not ask for thy father's crown,  
I do not ask for his throne,  
Nor his golden sceptre of wide renown,—  
I ask but for thee, my own."

"That cannot be," said she to me,  
"To my lonely grave I must go,  
But in dreams of the night I'll come to thee,  
Because I have loved thee so."

## II

The tea-table talk was poetic,  
They prattled of Love who is blind,  
The gentlemen all were æsthetic,  
The ladies of delicate mind.

“The best of all love is platonic,”  
The shrivelled old councillor cried ;  
His wife shook with laughter ironic,  
But under her laughter she sighed.

The canon next took up the question.

“Love should never be reckless, you know,  
For it’s apt to impair the digestion.”  
Lispèd the pert little school-girl, “How so ?”

The countess averred, reconditely,  
That “Love is a passion inbred ; ”  
Then she handed a tea-cup politely,  
To the baron who nodded his head.

There was one vacant seat at the table ;  
Had you filled it, and heard all their chatter,  
Little Sweetheart, you might have been able  
To tell what you know of the matter.

## III

A maiden to me all devoted,  
Sat in the skiff with me ;  
The night was still, and we floated  
On the boundless paths of the sea.

The Isles of the Blessed, before us,  
The ghostly moonlight laved,  
And a sweet voice sounded o'er us,  
And the arms of the white mist waved.

It called us, that voice so peerless,  
The white arms beckoned to stay,  
But we, in the boat, all cheerless,  
By the tide were carried away.

## IV

If you'll only become my dear wife,  
All your days and your nights shall be jolly ;  
If you will, you shall spend your whole life  
In nothing but flirting and folly.

And whenever your temper perverse is,  
I'll not scold though you scream yourself hoarse;  
But—if you don't praise up my verses,  
By Jove, I'll soon get a divorce.

## V

The world is blind, the world is dull,  
Grows duller, if that could be ;  
It says you're but a pretty trull,  
No better than you should be.

The world is blind, the world is dull,  
The point it always misses ;  
It little dreams how wonderful  
Are your sweet, burning kisses.

## VI

The glow of gracious summer  
Reddens upon thy cheek,  
But in thy little bosom  
Reigns winter, hard and bleak.

The hand of time must touch thee,  
Beloved that thou art,  
Then winter will reign on thy faded cheek,  
But summer within thy heart.

## VII

A stripling loves a lassie  
Who has another preferred ;  
This other loves another,  
And to her has pledged his word.  
  
The lassie, in her anger,  
Seeks vainly for relief,  
By taking the first who'll have her ;  
The stripling sickens of grief.

It's only an old old story,  
Old, and yet ever new,  
And the last to whom it happened  
His heart is broken in two.

## VIII

I will seek for my spirit a dwelling  
In the heart of a lily's white bell :  
From the lily, with sweetness excelling,  
A song of my loved one shall swell.  
  
And the song shall vibrate through the years,  
Like the kiss of her lips upon mine,  
That she gave me, with smiles and with tears,  
In a moment of rapture divine.

## IX

Thou hast known me true long years,  
And with me hast taken part ;  
Thou hast comforted my heart,  
Raised my hopes and soothed my fears.

Thou hast clothed and thou hast fed me,  
Thou hast shared with me thy store,  
Thou hast never closed thy door,  
And when parting thou hast sped me.

Now may God watch over thee,  
Shielding thee from cold and heat ;  
May He never chide thee, Sweet,  
For thy tenderness to me.

THE END



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